

CLAIMS

What the invention claimed is:

1. A method of operating a gaming system, the gaming system comprising a player tracking system (PTS) having a PTS database capable of storing player profile fields therein, said player being tracked by said PTS being either a sponsoring player or a recruited player, said method comprising:

creating at least one additional field for each player profile to store information identifying a recruited player's sponsoring player;

receiving information relating to the recruited player for the purpose of populating the recruited player profile and wherein said received information includes information identifying a sponsoring player;

establishing recruited player criteria;

accepting a recruited player into the PTS that meets the recruited player criteria;

populating and storing a player profile in said PTS database corresponding to said received information from said recruited player;

recording each player's gaming activity collected by said PTS database in each player's profile; and

offering ongoing, typically complimentary, benefits to the recruited player's sponsoring player based on the gaming activity of said recruited player;

2. The method of claim 1, wherein manual bookkeeping and player tracking replaces said PTS.

3. The method of claim 1, further comprising allowing a new player, subsequent to acceptance into said PTS, to become a sponsoring member.

4. The method of claim 3, further establishing a sponsoring hierarchy for recording the hierarchical relationship between sponsoring members and their sponsored players, wherein said hierarchical relationship would contain many levels of direct and indirectly sponsored players.

5. The method of claim 4, further comprising offering complimentary benefits to a first player based on the gaming activity or other qualified activity of subsequent players directly and indirectly sponsored by said first player as recorded in said sponsoring hierarchy.

6. The method of claim 5, wherein said offered complimentary benefits based on said sponsoring hierarchy are based on a selectable number of levels in said sponsoring hierarchy.

7. The method of claim 5, wherein said offered complimentary benefits are independently selectable for each level of an individual member's sponsored hierarchy.

8. The method of claim 5, wherein said offered complimentary benefits for each level of an individual member's sponsored hierarchy are selectable and based on a mathematical formula.

9. The method of claim 5, wherein said offered complimentary benefits for each level of an individual member's sponsored hierarchy are selectable and based on the nature of the qualified activity.

10. The method of claim 5, further comprising offering an immediate incentive to said sponsoring member of a new player upon acceptance of said new player into said PTS.

11. The method of claim 5, wherein qualified gaming activity is based on at least one of the following: the sum of all wagers placed by a player, the sum of all winnings associated with all wagers placed by a player, a configurable combination of a player's wagers and winnings, the net winnings associated with a player, and other qualified spending by a player.

12. The method of claim 5, wherein said offered complimentary benefits are associated with qualified activity participated in by direct and indirect recruits beyond a minimum wagering volume, wherein a recruit's gaming activity volume is a running sum of the value of all qualified gaming activity.

13. The method of claim 12, wherein said accumulated gaming activity volume is periodically set to zero.

14. The method of claim 10, further comprising populating the sponsoring member field of an existing member's player profile with information identifying a sponsoring member.

15. The method of claim 14, further comprising allowing a member of said PTS to change his sponsoring member to identify a different member of said PTS.

16. The method of claim 15, further comprising requiring permission from said first sponsoring member before said change is enacted.

17. The method of claim 16, wherein the method described operates in the environment of a single casino.

18. The method of claim 16, wherein the method described is extended to accommodate multiple locations of a gaming organization.

19. The method of claim 16, wherein the method described is extended to accommodate multiple locations of organizations affiliated with a gaming organization.

20. The method of claim 18, wherein a gaming organization includes a casino, a race track, a dog racing track, a horse racing track, a sports betting organization, a bingo hall, and a lottery as well as a bar, a retail store, and other facilities where legalized gaming is permitted.